LEVEL ONE

Soundings

News and Information from The Northwest Washington Synod

Volume 19, Number 5 May 2002

A Word From The Bishop, Wm Chris Boerger

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"...Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."
Matthew 19:14 NRSV

Easter Calls Us

Christ is risen! It was with great joy and a sense of sadness that this declaration began the worship at Spirit of Christ Lutheran Church in Everett on Easter morning. The joy was the same as the rest of God's people received as the good news of the resurrection greeted us. The sadness came from the fact that the service would be the last service of worship shared by this congregation. I was present to close the congregation.

The whys of this closure are still being discovered and will instruct our congregational planting in the future. What I will remember of this service is connected to my experience the night before at the Easter Vigil at Phinney Ridge Lutheran Church in Seattle. My Easter memories are of two young ladies (probably about 2 or 3 years of age).

Olin was baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus at Phinney Ridge. As all of the candidates for baptism and for affirmation of baptism were being presented and questioned, she joyously played in the water that would be used by God to unite her with Christ. The presider's introductions and

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Easter Calls Us

questions were punctuated by giggles from this child of God and by the sound of splashing water. It could not have been planned better.

At Spirit of Christ, Tiffany, came forward with her "pennies" to put into the large container that the childrens' offerings were placed in to support the congregation's ministry with Habitat for Humanity. It was obvious that Tiffany intended to be first to make her offering. With the slow deliberate pace of each penny being dropped it was clear that she intended to be last. But she finished before the others and so began a circuit of collecting change from members of her family, her congregation members, from total strangers to offer in the big jar. She made at least 10 trips from the pews to the jar and back. Her very presence was a challenge to increase the financial stewardship of the people present.

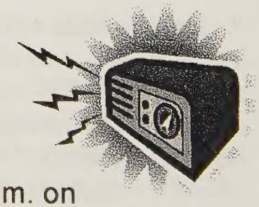
In both congregations there was audible laughter with these two young saints. We delighted in the joy exhibited in the water of baptism. We were amused and challenged by the joy of being able to give again and again.

"In Easter we have been given the joy of life in Christ."

In Easter we have been given the joy of life in Christ. These children have not yet learned that we are quiet at the font and at the time our offerings are collected. They just played in the water and gave away every penny, dollar or check given to them. God calls us to such joy in serving. From the giggles of new life to the life of active stewardship, Easter calls us to a new life. From these two children the old story took on renewed joy again. Christ is Risen!!!!

Words of Comfort

Did you hear the words of faith that Rev. Walt Wangerin shared with us as he walked us through Lent? We heard about Mary's hurt and Mary's healing. We heard about witnessing the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Lord. On April 14 we heard Wangerin speak with Presiding Bishop Hanson about Christ appearing in the family. This conversation with Bishop Hanson will continue on April 21 as they speak about how the Good Shepherd is the supreme pastor.



Please share with others this opportunity to hear the Word of God through storyteller Rev. Walt Wangerin on Sundays at 7:30 a.m. on KIRO 710 AM.

Northwest Washington Synod Information

Global Climate Change

by Jeanne Rehwinkel, Task Force Coordinator

On Saturday, May 4, the Synod Task Force on Global Climate Change will offer an orientation and training workshop to initiate implementation of the 2001 Synod Assembly Resolution, SA2001.11. The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Prince of Peace, Everett.

True to the theme, *Global Climate Change: A Faithful and Practical Response*, this training event is targeted to congregational leaders: social justice, education, stewardship, youth ministries and facilities management.

Existence of Clergy Housing Allowance Threatened

A case pending by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals could render clergy housing allowance unconstitutional.

Pastors who claim part of their income as housing allowance are encouraged to contact members of Congress to prevent the elimination of this long-standing tax benefit. Unless Congress acts soon, a federal court appears poised to strike down the clergy housing allowance exclusion. The result would cause an unprecedented tax increase and burden for clergy.

For more information, please see www.elcabop.org/benefit_plans/taxes_housing/call_to_action.asp

May Bishop's Convo

The Spring Bishop's Convo will be held on Ascension Day, May 9. We will gather at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Alderwood Manor, at 8:30 a.m. for worship, followed by the day's program, and conclude with lunch.

In the program, *Safe Haven for Children - Reducing the Risk of Abuse in our Churches*, we will look at what the gospel says about abuse and our response to it. We will hear from speakers who will present information about the occurrence of abuse and the damage that results. And, we will hear from a panel of pastors and lay leaders from our congregations who will offer ideas on developing policies and procedures to reduce the risk of abuse.

You are invited to bring with you someone who will provide leadership in developing and implementing safe child policies and procedures in your congregation. Watch for registration materials in the next few weeks.

Last Chance To Opt Back Into Social Security

The two-year window granted by Congress to opt back into the Social Security program is almost over. Clergy wishing to take the opportunity to re-enter the Social Security program must do so by April 15, 2002. For more information, see www.elcabop.org/benefit_plans/taxes_housing/reentry_window.asp

Life Together: Listening, Learning, Living

2002 Synod Assembly

Mark your calendars! The 2002 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly is scheduled for Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood.

This year's theme is: *Life Together: Listening, Learning, Living.* The theme will be centered around the topic of homosexuality. This was chosen because of the two resolutions that were passed at the 2001 Churchwide Assembly. (For more information, please go to the Synod's website at www.lutheransnw.org/Assembly2002/index.)

Keynote speaker for the Synod's Assembly is the **Rev. James M. Childs Jr.**, appointed in January 2002 to lead the ELCA study on Homosexuality. The **Rev. Charles Miller**, executive for administration and executive assistant to the Presiding Bishop, is the Churchwide Representative to our Assembly. (Biographical information on both Childs and Miller can be found on the Synod website. Click on 2002 Assembly.)

Chair of this year's Assembly Task Force is Steven Chapman, member of Central in Seattle. Steve can be reached at 206-322-3477 or email at chinadad@hotmail.com.

The 2002 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly Registration Packets were mailed in early March. Additional Assembly information can be found on the Synod's website.

The 2002 Northwest Washington Synod Assembly offering will be taken for *Stand With Africa*. *Stand With Africa* is a three-year campaign of Lutheran World Relief, the ELCA World Hunger Program and LC-MS World Relief. The campaign supports African churches and communities as they withstand HIV/AIDS, banish hunger and build peace. For more information about *Stand with Africa* go to Lutheran World Relief at www.lwr.org.

A special thank you to the 2002 Synod Assembly task force and to all the volunteers who are working hard to make this year's Assembly a success.

Early Plans For Sexuality Studies

Saying "we are engaged in the discovery of our God-given capacities as church," the Rev. James M. Childs Jr. discussed with the Conference of Bishops of the ELCA in March early plans for studies of homosexuality and human sexuality.

In his report to the bishops Childs said "there are no preconceived conclusions as to the content of the recommendations" to be presented in 2005 and subsequent churchwide assemblies. "It is the spirit in which I and a task force will approach this issue," he said. Soon, the church will launch a Web site for the project, through which synods and congregations can communicate and report on their work with members related to the study, Childs said.

(For the full text of this March 14 press release, go to http://listserv.elca.org/archives/elcanews.html, click on #20.)

Pastors Show Solidarity

As many as 200 ELCA pastors—including at least 32 synod bishops—were in New York from April 6-7 in a show of support for NY area ELCA pastors, congregations and ministries nearly seven months after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11. They participated together in a special worship service on April 6, and the visiting pastors preached in most New York-area ELCA congregations on April 7.

Those from our Synod who travelled to NY were: **Bishop Chris Boerger; Pastor Wayne Bacus of Queen Anne, Seattle; Pastor Bill Coffman of Immanuel, Seattle; Pastor Marjorie Funk-Pihl of First of Richmond Beach, Shoreline; Pastor Jim Lindus of Trinity, Freeland; and Pastor Linda Milks of Holy Cross, Bellevue.**

The weekend offered the New York-area congregations a chance to thank partners throughout the ELCA, "who sustained us with prayers and millions of dollars," said Rev. Stephen Bouman, bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan NY Synod.

The weekend also provided the congregations a chance to share stories with the visiting pastors about the continuing trauma for many people in the area, he said. "For us, we are still very much in the middle of it," Bouman said. "This will serve as a reminder for us and for others that we still need ministry, attention and help."

ELCA members contributed nearly $7 million through Lutheran Disaster Response for the church's responses to the terrorist attacks.

(For the full text of this March 27 press release go to: http://listserv.elca.org/archives/elcanews.html and click on #4.)

Maiers Commissioned

On April 7 Pastor Don and Sylvia Maier were commissioned at Phinney Ridge in Seattle to serve as Missionaries for the ELCA Division for Global Mission.

Pastor Maier will serve as Program Representative for Eastern and Central Europe, those areas formerly part of the Soviet Union. He has two major responsibilities: tend to relationships with 12 companion Lutheran Church bodies in the region and tend to about 25 ELCA members serving with those churches. He will visit and confer with church body leaders to build relationships and to identify ways that our churches can mutually strengthen each other for mission. He will also nurture the Companion Synod relationships between ELCA synods and companion churches in the region.

As Missionary Associate, Sylvia will maintain the home base, assist with administrative functions and share in missionary visitations.

The region served includes: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, seven regions of Russia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Yugoslavia, Croatia, Slovenia and Romania. Missionaries are currently working in Lithuania, Russia and Slovakia.

The Maiers will make their home in Tallinn, Estonia, for an initial period of 22 months. They will leave for Tallin on April 18.

For more information about the ELCA Division for Global Mission go to www.elca.org/dgm.

State Advocate's Corner

by Rev. Paul B. Benz, Director; Lutheran Public Policy Office

When I wrote last month's article the 57th session of our state legislature had not ended yet, but ..... they ended on time with no special session needed to be called! However, they did not finish their business of completely filling in the $1.6 billion budget deficit (they left a deficit between $30-40 million). Governor Locke had to complete that, which at this writing was not final as to how he would do that.

Following are some of the budget and legislative recaps of this past session:

Budget Highlights

- More than $600 million in spending cuts
- Raised $450 million by "securitizing" future tobacco settlement dollars
- Used $325 million from the "rainy day" reserve fund
- $24 million will come by our state as a part of a multi-state lottery: "Big Game"

Cuts Came From

- More than $21 million by transferring 25,000 immigrant children from the state's medical assistance administration to the Basic Health Plan (BHP). BHP doesn't provide dental or vision care and requires co-pays, premiums, and partial cost of prescription drugs.
- $28 million from the state's supplemental SSI.
- $5.4 million from the General Assistance Unemployable program.
- WIC (Women, Infant, Children), Head Start, and Early Childhood Education programs.
- Aid to cities and counties.
- Public Schools & Higher Education
- $1.68 million from the Family Reconciliation Program.

Bills That Passed (LPPO Supported)

- HB 2060. The low income housing bill or recording fee bill.
- Racial Profiling bill.
- HB 2338. The Drug Sentencing bill.
- HB 1248. Domestic Violence Unemployment Insurance bill.

Bills That Didn't Pass (LPPO Supported)

- Corporate disclosure, Gun show loophole closure, the HELP bill (Higher Education Lifelong Progress), and the Drug Prescription bill.

I appreciate all who have invited me to their congregation to 'teach & preach' about the advocacy ministry of our Church. June 30 will close out the end of my fiscal year and any contributions from congregations or individuals are greatly appreciated to keep this ministry in the black! The shared internship between St. John United and LPPO will begin in August. More on that later.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 206-694-5772 or at benz@lcsnw.org.

Middle East Update

For your information, the NWWA Synod has listed some information on their website regarding the problems in the Middle East. This includes several recent ELCA press releases and the letter Presiding Bishop Hanson wrote to President Bush on April 2. Please check out the Synod's website at www.lutheransnw.org. Our site will also link you to a couple of other important websites.

Please, Pray for Peace

As we continue to hear and read in the media about the trouble in the Middle East and Jerusalem, please join in the **ecumenical prayer vigil** for the Christian communities in Jerusalem, for all those who are suffering in the Holy Land, for Palestinians and Israelis, and for peace in the Middle East and the world.

Organized by state, the vigil began in Alabama and New York the First Sunday in Advent, December 3, 2000. The vigil will continue on the same day each month in each state until the violence in the Middle East ends and all can celebrate a just and lasting negotiated resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. **People in the Northwest Washington Synod are invited to focus on the Middle East in their daily prayers on the 18th of each month.** For more information about the prayer vigil or about Jerusalem and the Middle East, go to www.loga.org.

Making a Difference Grants Available Now

Effective immediately, Lutheran congregations and Lutheran institutions are able to apply for grants to assist them in ministry relating to lay training that leads to actual lay ministry and for outreach approaches that spread the Gospel.

The deadline for applications is **June 1, 2002.**

Priority will be given to projects with strong local financial support, projects with long-term sustainability and to projects with the potential to become self-supporting.

Funds for the *Making a Difference Grants* are provided by AAL/LB and are administered by the Great Northwest Agency Advisory Board, which consists of church leaders.

These onetime grants are provided with the express intention of strengthening the ministry of congregations and Lutheran institutions

A joint ELCA, LC-MS and AAL/LB committee will review applications and select the successful candidates.

Grant guidelines and application forms may be obtained on-line by emailing or calling your Synod/District office, or by calling Ron Coen at 1-800-395-3512.

Lutheran Men To Discover "Blueprints for Living"

Men of all ages will come together to discover God's blueprint—God's plan—for their lives and ministry at the *2002 Blueprints for Living* Lutheran Men's Gathering in San Antonio, July 26-28.

"The purpose of the *Blueprints for Living* Lutheran Men's Gathering will be for men to gather and be 'rooted and established in love so that they might have the power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,' as the Bible says, and leave empowered to serve Christ in their family, church and community," said Lutheran Men in Mission Director Doug Haugen.

Registration information is available on-line at www.elca.org/lmm/lmmgathr or by calling 1-800-638-3522.

Dare to Live God's Promise

Plan now to attend the 2002 Global Mission Events at one of two locations: July 18 - 21 at Hickory in North Carolina, or July 25-28 at Minneapolis, Minn. All congregations received information about these dates in their January-February 2002 Action Packet. For more information go to www.elca.org/dgm/gme2002/index or call 1-800-638-3522.

Women of the ELCA

Triennial Gathering

Gather with thousands of your Lutheran sisters from across the United States for worship, Bible study, workshops and on-site visits to exciting Christian ministries.

Women of the ELCA Fifth Triennial Gathering will be held from July 8-14, 2002, at the Pennsylvania Convention Center (and various hotels) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Cost for the *full week* is $225 if paid on or before May 1, or $280 after May 1.

The *three-day registration* includes all gathering activities on July 11, 12 and 13. Cost is $200 if paid on or before May 1, or $250 after May 1. Scholarships are available.

Registration information is available on-line at www.elca.org/wo; by telephone at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730; by fax at 773-380-2419; or by email at womnelca@elca.org.

Thank You, Women of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA gave a $700,000 gift to the ELCA for its ministries around the world in 2001. Among other business, the amount of the gift was announced at the Women of the ELCA executive board meeting March 14-17.

Women of the ELCA budgets a financial gift to the ELCA every year. The 2001 gift includes $307,980 to the ELCA budget; $155,516 to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal; and $35,969 to Lutheran World Relief. The gift also supports domestic ministries of the church.

Music Conference

The Leadership Program for Musicians (LPM) is holding a Music Conference from June 25 through June 29 at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisc.

Courses include: Congregational Song; Hymnody; Liturgy and Music: Foundations of Christian Worship; Principles of Choral Leadership: Voice Training for Choirs and Conducting for Church Musicians; Teaching New Music; Resources for Effective Music Ministry; and Philosophy of Church Music.

Conference fee is $275 plus $110 for food and a $35 college facility fee. For more information go to www.lpm-online.org or call 703-250-6757. Registration deadline is June 7.

This conference is a joint program of the Episcopal Church USA and the ELCA.

To What Is God Calling You?

To What is God Calling You? A Retreat To More Clearly Hear God's Call is designed to help you or someone you know who is wrestling with this question. The retreat will be held May 7 through 19 at Triangle Lake Center, Blachly, OR (west of Junction City and NW of Eugene).

The retreat is designed to be an extension of the wrestling with call that you have already done, yet gives you a new context, new friends, and perhaps new insight and direction for your response to what God is calling you to do.

Registration deadline is on or before May 6. Cost is $165. For more information contact Rev. Neal Buckaloo at 509-927-4232 or Erma Lee at 206-624-0093.

Summer Institute for Liturgy and Worship

at Seattle University

The School of Theology and Ministry of Seattle University invites you to a week in which reflection, discussions, rehearsals and worship services will illuminate and inform our daily ministry. The Summer Institute will be held July 7 through 12 and is open to pastors, lay liturgical leaders, lectors, Communion servers, acolytes and anyone else who has a leadership role in the church.

Institute fee is $250 plus cost of meals. (For more detailed information about meals and housing, please contact the School of Theology and Ministry at 206-296-5984 or go to www.seattleu.edu/theomin/summerinstitute.html.)

Summer Courses for Church Musicians

at Trinity Lutheran Seminary

Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, is offering three separate one-week courses (Perspective in Choral Conducting, Building Parish Music Programs, Music Technology for Church Musicians, Handbells, and African American Music & Worship) and one three-week course (Liturgical Choir) for church musicians. For more information contact Trinity Lutheran Seminary at 614-235-4136 or email at registrar@TrinityLutheranSeminary.edu. Or, visit their website at www.TrinityLutheranSeminary.edu. Registration must be received by May 10.

Youth Gatherings

"face 2 face get connected"

The Western States Youth Gathering will be held July 1 through 7, 2002, in San Jose, Calif. There will be awesome mass gatherings, enthusiastic speakers and lively music. This gathering is for youth in 9-12 grades. Cost is $224 per person, plus $120 for hotel cost per night per room. For more information go to www.wsyg.com or call 1-888-852-FACE.

Do Life! Ubuntu!

It's not too early to be thinking about the 2003 ELCA Youth Gathering in Atlanta, Ga. The dates are July 16-20 and July 23-27. The theme for the Gathering is *Do Life! Ubuntu!.*

Registration materials will be mailed in April. Cost is $224 per person, which includes all the program materials and secondary insurance. Housing and meals are not included. More information is at www.elca.org/gathering or call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2100.

In Memoriam—The Rev. Walter C. Gravrock

The Rev. Walter C. Gravrock passed away on April 2, 2002. His funeral service was held on April 5 at Cross of Christ in Bellevue.

Rev. Gravrock was born on August 9, 1913, in Everett. He attended St. Olaf College in Northfield and Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul. He was ordained in 1943. He married Lorraine Trehus in 1942 and they had three children.

Pastor Gravrock served the following congregations: Heron Lake, Delafield and Brewster, Minn; Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Oxnard, Calif; Ascension Lutheran, Thousand Oaks, Calif; Central Lutheran in Oakland, Calif; and as a visitation pastor at Phinney Ridge, Seattle. After his retirement in 1984 he was Minister of Outreach at Trinity in Lynnwood, and served interims at Peace in Silvana; Grace in Cashmere; and Burlington in Burlington.

Memorial gifts are designated for the PLU Choral Union, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA 98447-0003.

Peace to his memory.

Faith and Reason Video Series

The Region 1 Resource Center now has the entire set of four Faith and Reason video series. These interesting and provocative presentations span a wide variety of topics and are perfect for adult discussion groups. Each video is 25 minutes in length. To reserve your video, call 206-624-0093, ext. 100. Video titles and some topics are:

- **Historical Jesus Issues** (v-1217-22): What do we know about the historical Jesus?
- **Jesus, Faith and Practice** (v-1229-34): What should we believe about Jesus?
- **Our Relationship with God** (v-1064-69): Is God just? Does God punish or reward us?
- **Living Your Faith** (v-1223-28): What can we expect from prayer? The Bible: Fact or Fiction?

Within Our Family

Within Our Family *depends upon you–not only for prayers, but also your prayer requests. Please contact the Synod office with any additions to this column.*

To Keep in Our Prayers....

† The family of **The Rev. Walter Gravrock (ret.).** Pastor Gravrock passed away on April 2. (Please see page 10.)

† The family of **The Rev. Alvin Lawrence Selid,** 84, of Beaverton, Oregon. Pastor Lawrence passed away on March 19. Pastor Selid was ordained in 1945. He served a four point parish in Drake, ND; a three point call in Enderlin, ND; Trinity in Silverton, Oregon; Zion in Spokane, Wash; and Central, Salem in Oregon. Pastor Selid retired in 1980 and served for many years as Visitation Pastor at St. Matthew's, Beaverton, OR. Peace to his memory.

† The congregation of **Spirit of Christ in Everett and their pastor, Gary Dalenius.** The congregation closed after their final worship service on Easter Sunday. (Please see Bishop Boerger's column on page 1.)

† **Rev. Jim Schoeld (ret.) and his wife Rachel** who were in a serious one-car accident last summer. Continued prayers for their recovery.

† **The Rev. Doug Langholz** (Magnolia, Seattle) who continues to suffer the debilitating effects of ALS. Pastor Langholz is on disability, but has been able to perform limited ministerial duties at Magnolia Lutheran with the help of **Rev. Mark Reiff.** Pastor Langholz is now unable to continue those tasks and must bring his ministry to a close. He and his wife, Mary, will continue to worship at Magnolia. You can contact Pastor Doug and Mary Langholz at: 2802 - 29th Ave. W, Seattle, WA 98199-2710; telephone 206-285-6214. The Rev. Mark Reiff will continue to serve the congregation of Magnolia.

† **The Rev. Robert Moylan (ret.)** as he deals with progressive muscular dystrophy.

† For all of our **rostered leaders and congregations** both within our Synod and in the ELCA.

Congratulations...

† To **Clara Griffin, Associate in Ministry,** at Trinity in Everett. Clara and John Griffin became grandparents on Feb. 14 to Kaitlyn Julianna Esperon.

† To **Yoseph Petros**, his wife, **Rahel Lemu,** and their children on receiving their green cards for permanent residence in the USA. They emigrated from Ethiopia a few years ago. Yoseph worked at the Synod Office last summer and is now employed as Parish Administrator at Sammamish Hills in Sammamish.

News and Notes

❖ The Spring Ingathering for Lutheran World Relief will take place on Friday, May 3, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday, May 4, from 8 a.m. to noon. Bring items to Our Redeemer's, 2400 NW 85th St in Seattle.

Tell Us How We Are Doing

The Synod's Communication Committee is conducting a quick survey about Soundings. The publication's purpose is to share information about events, news, and other information that might be of interest to you and to the congregations in our synod. Your input is very important. Results will be listed in a future publication.

Yes	No	Question
		I read most of each issue.
		I read selected articles in each issue, i.e. Bishop's Column or Family News.
		I skim through the publication. If yes, why?
		I find the articles to be informative. If no, what would improve the publication:
		I like the mix of articles, i.e. short informational articles, longer informational articles.
		The publication is easy to read, i.e. type size, paper size, layout, etc.
		The publication is published just the right amount, i.e. 11 times a year. If no, do you want fewer or more issues?
		I download the publication from the Synod's website.
		Other comments (please give specific examples of what you like and don't like):

Send responses to Margit Peiffle (address at right). Thank you.

Soundings

News and information for pastors, associates in ministry, lay leaders and ecumenical friends of the

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(Permission to copy information in Soundings for use in congregations is granted.)

The deadline for the June/July 2002 issue of Soundings and The Spirit is Monday, May 6. Send information to: Margit Peiffle, 21721 88th Ave. NE, Arlington, WA 98223; fax: 360-435-5955; email: peifflepr@aol.com; or telephone 360-403-9870.